

NOT TRUE!! – Exploding Jamaican myths about dogs

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Jamaicans have developed some strange ideas about dogs that veterinarians have struggled to correct whenever they come up in practice. Here are some of them:

Puppies swallow their teeth making them get sick. Not true! Puppies change their baby teeth and grow permanent ones between 3 and 5 months of age. It occurs perfectly naturally and does then no harm. Think about it, what about all the bones many dogs chew and swallow? Fragments pass straight through and exit at the other end! Puppies do get sick and may die, but this is from diseases such as worm infestations, parvovirus, coccidiosis, bacterial infections, to name a few!

Lamp oil is to be used to treat worms: Not true! “Lamp oil” in the Jamaican context is fish oil. That’s the very same fish oil that we take as a nutritional supplement containing “good” fats and vitamins A and E. For dogs it does the same. Worms are treated with deworming medications such as pyrantel, fenbendazole and ivermectin.

Puppies’ tails contain worms. Cutting them off prevents worms: NOT TRUE!! There is absolutely no basis for this! A dog’s tail is a natural part of its body used in communication and balance. Removing the tail deprives them of this and nowadays is considered an inhumane procedure in many veterinary circles. Removing to tail does NOT make a dog “bad”.

Dog bites are poisonous: Not true! Dogs do not produce venom like some snakes do. The danger from bites is the introduction of bacteria into the wound which can result in infection, along with the physical damage that is done. If you are bitten by a dog, see your doctor who will determine any treatment you may need.

Mongrel dogs don't need health care: Not true! Though the Jamaican "mongrel" is a tough hound that often survives much neglect, they suffer from the same illnesses as so-called "good" breeds. Many die from worms, parvovirus, tick fever, liver disease etc. Dogs are our faithful companions. No matter what "breed", they deserve all the care we can offer.